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THE
BRIGAND.

A POEM.

✓
BY EMERSON BENNETT.
"

He left a Corsair's name to other times,
Linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes.—*Byron.*

IN TWO CANTOS.

New-York:

XYLOGRAPHIC PRESS 23 ANN STREET.

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1842.



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P R E F A C E .

IN presenting this little Poem to the public, the Author would simply state, that at the time of its commencement, nothing was more foreign to him than the idea of *publishing* it, which would never have been done except at the solicitation of many friends. Should any so far favor him as to give it an attentive perusal, and at its close deem their time not unprofitably spent, it will afford him sincere gratification.

NEW YORK, October, 1842.

"About that time there was a conspiracy laid, headed by one Don Pedro, who, to carry out his project, was base enough to attempt the life of his niece; for being the next akin he would come into possession of her property. He was foiled by his brother, whom he supposed to be dead. In his rage, supposing him to be a stranger, he slew him; but on finding he had slain his brother, the shock was so great as to cause his death."

Extract from Notes of S. Amer. Traveller.

THE BRIGAND.

CANTO FIRST.

THE sun had passed the western hill,
But on the heights he linger'd still,
As if to take one last adieu,
Ere sable night her mantle drew :
It was a scene for painter's gaze,
As Sol sent up his dying rays ;
Now lighting many a rugged height,
As some bright object caught his light—
Now giving to some lovely glade,
That soft delightful twilight shade,
Which painters oft strive to attain,
But art 'gainst nature strives in vain.

'Twas such a night ;—the air was calm,
The radiant sun had left it warm ;
Among the foliage of the trees
Rushed gently in the balmy breeze,

As through the forest quickly went
A stranger on some mission bent :
His was the stern, unyielding look,
Which few or none would care to brook ;
That clouded brow and haughty mien,
That mantle closely wrapt to screen,
That wayward look, that eager glance,
That sudden start, if he by chance
Heard aught except the hollow sound
His footsteps made upon the ground,
Boded no good, if we divine
The inward man by outward sign.

'Twas where the lofty Andes vie,
To rear their peaks above the sky,
(As if to them the power was given
Of linking earth as 't were with heaven,)
The stranger plod his lonely way :
The distant lights of Arquepa,
Shone dimly to his restless eyes,
As up some craggy point he'd rise,
Now twinkling, moving, now unseen,
As various objects came between,
Resembling much the lightning fly,
That sparkling o'er the meadows ply.
To objects round scarce giving heed,
But on with undiminished speed,
The stranger up some cliff would rise,

Until his form relieved the skies ;
But like the swiftly bounding fawn,
'Twas scarcely seen ere it was gone,
And rustling bushes far ahead,
Bespoke the stranger's rapid tread.

Two fleeting hours of time had flown,
When stood the stranger, mute, alone,
Within a mansion's spacious hall,
While servant went his lord to call ;
Of time a moment scarce had fled,
So quickly had the servant sped,
Ere the hall's dim flickering rays,
Showed host and guest each other's gaze.
No kindly greetings either gave,
Each seem'd the other's thoughts to crave ;
For sometime naught the silence broke,
Until at length the stranger spoke ;
“ You sent—I came—what more with me ?
Few words with us will best agree,
Therefore be brief, your wish relate,
For form, like mockery, I hate ;
The deed I'll do, whate'er it be,
Though not for love of that or thee ;
But money holds with me such charm,
To gain it, I would others harm ;
For deeds of blood in me you'll find
A ready hand and willing mind ;

Thus far I've at your purpose guessed,
Although all this your look expressed.
Nay, start not ; if I am not right,
But wave your hand, I'll quit your sight ;—
Don Pedro, thou art known to me,
Therefore pray feign no secresy.”
Don Pedro with his look cast down,
His dark brow knit with sullen frown,
In silence through, the stranger heard,
Before he deigned to speak a word ;
Then slowly up his eyes he raised,
And sternly on the other gazed ;
“ Stranger,” (in hollow voice he said,
Whose tones would well become the dead,)
“ Stranger ! wert thou born of earth ?
Or did old Pluto give thee birth ?
Did'st thou in heaven once rebel ?
That thou all crimes can brook so well ?
As I thine ugly features scan,
I half repent me of my plan.”

“ Don Pedro, hold, say not thus twice,
Or thy heart's blood will be the price ;
I'm not the man to bear the sneer,
Of baser wretches, cowed by fear ;
It matters not, how, where, or when,
I first this wretched life began ;
Enough it is, I know thee well,

And if I chose, a tale could tell,
Before which thy stern eye would quail—
But that my purpose don't avail :
If thou to me hast aught to say,
Speak quick, be brief, short is my stay.”

Sometimes a thought like some past dream,
On memory will an instant gleam,
Lighting it with its vivid light,
As distant lightning in the night
Some far-off object flashes o'er,
Then leaves it darker than before :
So with Don Pedro, as he gazed
Upon the stranger, felt amazed ;
He thought, ('t was but a thought, no more,)
That he that form had seen before ;
And by that thought's quick flashing rays,
He saw years of his early days.
“ But, no,” he muttered, “ 't is not he,
Although 't is like, yet cannot be ;
When young he in the lake was drown'd,
And I, aye I, his body found ;
'Tis true his features were decayed,
So much no likeness could be made ;
But then the garments bore his name,
And when last seen he wore the same :
Yes, well his oath did ruffian keep,
Alphonso ! thou in death dost sleep ;

The price to hurl thee from the strand,
Myself placed in the ruffian's hand,
Forgive me ! holy virgin Mother,
Like Cain, I've slain my only brother.
But why this tear—is't for relief ?
Away, fell harbinger of grief,
Away, nor ever be it said,
Don Pedro's eyes a tear have shed ;
No, rather streams of blood should flow,
Then I such weakness ever know ;
The world thus far has yet believed
That I am virtuous—how deceived
Mankind may be by outward show,
When inward man they cannot know ;
They think me virtuous ! me, whose mind
To noble deeds was ne'er inclined :
Enough—they'll know me when it's time,
"Till then let virtue stand for crime."

" Well, stranger, now I'll with thee speak
Of business ,which thou cam'st to seek ;
But, first I'd know with whom I deal,
Ere further I my plan reveal :
Thy name I'd know, for understand,
Thy looks bespeak thee a Brigand."

" My name ! Don Pedro, would'st thou
High on the lofty Andes go, [know ?

Among bold hearts Gonlez proclaim,
They'll tell thee 'tis their Chieftain's name,
Whose word is law they sacred hold ;
That chief before thee, now, behold !"
He spoke, and off his mantle threw—
A chieftain stood exposed to view.

“ 'Tis well, Gonlez, I 'm satisfied ;
That dress bespeaks thy courage tried ;
And now methinks I know thee well,
At least I dare my secret tell.
Know this, I have a sister's child,
On whom in fondness oft I've smiled,
Who was to me my life, my soul,
Till selfish passions got control.
When very young, her parents died,
I both their death-beds stood beside ;
Her father left her to my care,
To all his property an heir ;
But when she dies (so reads the will)
The next akin shall heir it still ;
I am the next—need I more tell,
Or dost thou understand me well ?
But ah ! what means that sudden start,
Thine eyes with fury seem to dart
Rays which would pierce a coward's heart :
Dost fear ? Gonlez, to do the deed ?
If so, no more of thee I need.

“Me fear! Don Pedro, said’st thou so?
I would thou did’st me better know;
As soon thoud’st ask the morning sun,
If through his course he feared to run;
Or ask as soon the ocean’s wave,
If rocky shores it feared to lave;
Or ask as soon the howling blast,
If ’t feared the objects which it past;
As ask if fear e’er held a part
Within the chieftain Gonlez’ heart.

“No, no, Don Pedro, ’tis not fear,
But pity claims a champion here;
Dost start, and wonder, think it strange,
How pity can the purpose change,
Of one who ne’er did noble deed,
Nor laws of God or man would heed?
Know this—none are so lost in crimes,
But will some pity feel at times
For those whose life to them is sold,
Paid with some villain’s cursed gold.
Although they may not this reveal,
Still, not the less, its power they feel.
In deeds of blood I’ve passed my days,
Nor have I shrank from any gaze;
Bred up from youth in Satan’s school,
I o’er the wicked learned to rule;
When I command none disobey—

'T is death to him who utters nay ;
Still would I of my vow repent,
And ask Don Pedro to relent ;
Cause not the murder of a friend,
Though gold should tempt thee to that end.

“ Villain ! ” cried Pedro, in a rage,
“ Was it for this thou didst engage ?
For this didst vow the deed to do,
Until my secret plan you knew ?
For this, disguised like brigand chief,
To better work on my belief,
That thou might'st tell me in the end
'T were wrong for me to slay my friend ?
Ah ! stranger, 't was a desperate game
To take a chieftain's dress and name ;
Thou thought'st to take me unaware,
But thou are caught within thy snare ;
Now, prove thyself no secret spy,
Or, by this hand, thou 'lt surely die.”

“ Hold ! hold, Don Pedro, ere too late,
Let not thy rashness seal thy fate ;
If thou to-morrow's sun would'st see,
Then must thy speech more guarded be ;
I would not spill thy guilty blood,
Nor for the vultures make thee food ;
But thou hast dared me to the act,

Those words—mark me—thou must retract,
Or, by my blood-stained sword, I swear
Thou scarce hast time to say a prayer !
That I'm a villain, well I know,
And thou the one that made me so ;
Nay, frown not, 't is a chieftain's word,
One who 'll maintain it by his sword :
But if you deem me as a spy,
Then one or both of us must die.
Retract, in time, the words thou spoke,
Or thou shalt feel a villain's stroke ;
The oath I've sworn I never broke.”
He spoke—then with a sullen look,
His sword he from its scabbard took.

Don Pedro eyed him well the while,
Then with a bold, sarcastic smile,
Replied : “ Thou art within my power !
A prison holds thee ere an hour :
Then, if thou 'scape thy prison vault,
It shall not be Don Pedro's fault.

“ Dost doubt me still ?” Gonlez replied,
“ If so, let other means be tried :”
He spoke, then shrill throughout the hall
A whistle rang like boatswain's call ;
Three times the hall sent forth the sound,
Three times a distant answer found ;

Then stillness reigned, as if the dead
Stood sentinels in living stead ;
But scarce of time a minute o'er,
Ere widely swung the heavy door,
And with a quick and lawless pace
Some twenty brigands filled the place :
“ Here, seize the traitor,” Gonlez cried ;
“ Let both his hands and feet be tied :”
And, ere a minute, Pedro found
Himself a prisoner, and bound.

“ Well, Don, is it as thou surmised,
That I 'm some knave-like chief dis-
guised ?
If so, I think thou'lt not deny
That I 'm at least no *secret* spy.”
“ Enough, enough,” Don Pedro cried,
“ That thou 'rt the chief I'm satisfied ;”
“ 'T is well,” was Gonlez' stern reply ;
“ Now quick, men, to your coverts hie.”
Scarce had his lips the words proclaimed,
Ere in the hall but two remained.
He turned, and with his trusty sword
From Pedro's limbs quick cut the cord :
“ Arise thee, on thy feet now stand,
And know that I alone command ;
Speak thou no more such dastard lies,
Of villains, prisons, secret spies,

But to thy business quick proceed
If thou would'st have me do the deed.

“ Now to thy plan—the girl must die,
And thou hast shown the reason why.
I undertake—the deed is bold,
My price, one hundred pistoles, gold.”
“ Gonlez, thou hast rightly said ;
The girl must die—thou shalt be paid ;
And mind, if surely done and fair,
Another hundred is thy share.”
And while he spoke he drew his purse,
Paid down the gold, that tempting curse.

Oh, cursed Gold ! thou tempting thing,
How many feel thy poisonous sting,
Which festers, cankers at the heart,
Destroys at once all manly part.
He who the least of gold doth know,
That man 's the happiest here below ;
For gold and power are both allied
So near, they scarce seem to divide.
He who has gold much power can hold,
And who has power must have the gold.
Why tremble thrones, why nations shake ?
Why leaves time such a bloody wake ?
Why cities ravished, houses burned ?
Why quiet to disquiet turned ?

Sum up—the answer's quickly told—
Man seeks for power, man seeks for gold.
So thought Gonlez, as Pedro gave
The greatest boon his heart did crave,
Then, turning, bade his host adieu,
First swearing he should find him true.
Now as his silent way he took,
His clouded brow and anxious look,
Bespoke within, a troubled mind,
Of feelings vague and undefined ;
As near unto the woods he drew,
He mutter'd, “ Aye, thou'lt find me true—
True to my cause, but not to thine,
Although thy gold has crossed with mine.
'T was needful I a game should play,
To drive suspicious fears away ;
That I might better plan my scheme,
Of which thou dost but little dream.
Had I not taken of thy gold,
Perchance some other villain bold,
Lured by thy yellow glittering dust,
Had done the deed which would thee curst,
And Inez fair, thy lovely niece,
For hungry wolves had made a feast ;
But still, with all thy well-wrought net,
Thou'lt find that I can foil thee yet !

“ Though dyed in blood and steeped in crime,

One noble deed shall yet be mine ;
For by the elements I swear,—
By earth, by water, fire, and air,
Whate'er of other deeds I've done,
Howe'er so bloody course I've run,
Hear it, ye breezes, waft it high—
I swear to save the girl, or die !”
A smile then round his lips did play,
Like sunshine in a cloudy day,
Which for a moment glances clear,
Then all again is dark and drear ;
And ere he in the copse did turn,
His smile gave way to look more stern.

That night, as Pedro sought his rest,
Strange were the feelings in his breast ;
For guilt lay heavy on his soul,
And scarce could he his fear control :
“ Well, well,” he mutter'd, “ she must die,
And gold will absolution buy ;
Then mass shall for her soul be said—
That will at least keep still the dead ;
Oh, foolish thought,—that spirits rise—
Yet still methinks my brother's eyes
Have peer'd upon me in the dark ;
Nay, 'twas some foolish dream—but hark !
I hear a noise—pshaw ! nought but leaves,
That rustle to the passing breeze ;

Why do I start when sounds I hear ?
Strange thought ! can I be ruled by fear ?
Have I not faced Death's hideous form
In sickness, battle, and in storm ?
Nor trembled I, but stern and mute,
I faced Death firm and resolute ?
But now my heart leaps with a bound,
If I but hear the slightest sound ;
What is the cause ?" (let conscience tell,
For to the guilty 'tis a hell,)
"And shall I who have steeled my heart,
That love and fear may have no part—
Shall I then droop like some pluck'd flower,
When in my grasp are wealth and power ?
No ! all is staked—the die is cast—
I will abide it to the last,
Though ghosts, and all hell's demons rise
In hideous shapes before my eyes !"
Then as he spoke he madly turned,
To seek that rest his conscience spurned.

Time supposed to elapse between the first and second
canto, one week.

THE BRIGAND.

CANTO SECOND.

'T is morn : and in the eastern skies,
With lovely pomp the sun doth rise ;
Now sending forth his brilliant light
Into the darkest shades, and night,
Dark night, withdraws her sable pall,
Obedient to the morning call :
The leaves by scarce a breeze are stirred,
The warblers' silvery notes are heard,
And nature wears her gayest smile ;
Unlike to man's, 't is free from guile.

Within Don Pedro's spacious grounds
Is heard the morning's stirring sounds ;
Each one, to suit his master's mind,
Performs the task to him assigned ;
Each one a cheerful visage wears,
Save HIM whose look is full of cares,
Whose mind with hellish thoughts is rife ;
For him no cheerful look has life,
For him no sun sends forth his light,
But all is chaos, drear, and night.

“ Bring forth my steed—I fain would ride :”

“ 'T is brought,” his valet soon replied.

“ 'T is well—I shall return at night ;

Beware, that all within goes right :

If, by neglect, thou rouse my scorn

'T were better thou wert never born.”

Then mounting on his fiery steed,
Don Pedro rode away with speed.

Could we the inward man behold,
How many secrets would be told ;
How many hearts, found full of guile,
Whose outward look is winning smile,
Whose every word a smile will gloss—
Will smile, though you their wishes cross !
Of such beware—'tis acted part—
Deception rankles at their heart ;
They 'll smile to set your fears at rest,
Next, plunge a dagger in your breast.

Of such Don Pedro was a man
Who chose the guise to suit his plan :
Did it the taunting jeer require,
By which to rouse his victim's ire ;
Was it the smooth and oily word,
By which he would deceive the herd ;
Or, was 't the bold, decided speech ?
He ever had a word for each.
To study man, it was his rule,
That he might use him as his tool.
Of riches much he was possest,
Which, rightly used, had made him blest :
Alas ! in an unguarded hour,
He felt ambition's fatal power ;
Lured on by her enchanting spell,
An easy victim soon he fell ;
And now his mind was madly bent

To seize the reins of government,
That to posterity his name
Might blazon on the list of fame.
For this much gold did he require ;
Where flattery failed, he fain would hire :
That he might gain another's share,
He scrupled not to kill the heir,
Although that heir his sister's child,
So bent was he on scheme so wild.

Some lines on paper, faintly traced,
Into his hand this morn were placed,
Which read, " of traitors pray beware—
Guard well thy actions,—have a care—
Take horse and ride thee to the Pine,*
Where thou this warning wilt divine."
And on this mission he was bent,
As from the mansion forth he went.

Time flits—'tis ever on the wing ;
How many changes doth it bring !
A year, oft as a day appears,
A day, will bring the change of years,
As passed in virtue or in crime ;
So measure we the length of time.

'T is noon—and in the shady bowers,
To while away the noontide hours,
Fair Inez sits, in lovely bloom,
And dreams not of her cruel doom ;

* A name which the conspirators gave to their place of meeting.

Her eyes are like the stars of night,
So soft their beaming, yet so bright ;
They speak a mind well stored with sense,
They speak a mind of innocence :
Now waves the breeze some flowing curl,
Now round her snow-white neck 't will furl,
As if in fear to leave the spot
Where nature has such beauty wrought.
Beside her sits one held most dear,
One who would fain be ever near ;
Who at her lovely form hath gazed,
Until himself hath felt amazed ;
As sudden starts he from his trance,
Their eyes have met, as 't were by chance ;
That look, so pure, so full of love,
'T were worthy of the saints above.

“ Alonzo, see you yon sweet flower ?
This morn 't were worthy fairy's bower,
But now, beneath the mid-day sun,
It droops and fades, its race near run ;
And as the gentle nightwinds sigh,
Its petals close, perchance to die.
Thus we, the creatures of a day,
Are born to bloom and fade away ;
Oh ! Heaven grant that my last hour
May close as gently as that flower !”
“ Fear not, dear Inez, for thy end
With peace and harmony will blend ;
As the bright rays of yonder sun

Grow lovely when his course is run,
So thou, as life shall pass away,
Will shed around a lovely ray ;
And as the sun again doth rise,
Adding fresh beauty to the skies,
Thy spirit, borne on wings of love,
Will shine another sun above.
But why did'st thou this subject seek ?
I'd fain of other matters speak :
Methink's there's sadness in thy tone—
Come, Inez, let the truth be known ;
However seen by other eyes,
There's one, you know, will sympathize.”

“ However foolish it may seem,
I owe my sadness to a dream ;
And as I think for me you feel,
In confidence will it reveal.

“ Last night, when I had sought repose,
And gentle sleep my eyes did close,
A thousand forms did flit around,
On which I gazed like one spell-bound ;
Then o'er my eyes a mist seemed thrown—
They vanished, and I stood alone ;
Next one appeared, and high in air
He waved his hand, and cried, ‘ beware !’
With slow and stately step he passed,
His hand still waving to the last ;
Next in my vision one there came
Whom well I know, but will not name ;

First, with a gentle smile he bowed,
Then sterner grew his look, and proud ;
Next passion raged, so fierce and bold
His look, it made my blood run cold ;
Then pale he turned, with sunken cheek,
In hollow voice these words did speak :
' Inez, we now for ever part'—
The life-blood curdled round my heart ;
That agony I ne'er can tell—
My brain grew sick, I reeled and fell ;
Next in my vision I awoke
With soft and gentle words one spoke,
' Fear not, for guilt must have its end,
Though others fail, I 'm still thy friend :'
I turned, and met Alonzo's glance—
Was I awake, or in a trance ?
Next, horrid sight, my eyes did meet ;
For blood was puddling round my feet—
The two lay corpses on the floor
From each slow oozed the purple gore :
A sudden start my slumber broke—
With joy it was a dream, I woke ! ”

“ Well, Inez, 't was a horrid dream ;
' T is true it ominous doth seem,
But dreams are wanderings of the mind,
And to strange fancies are inclined ;
Fear not, for should it ill portend,
As in thy dream, count me thy friend ;
Aye, Inez, I the truth must own,

I would not always live alone :
Speak but the word thou cans't divine—
My heart, hand, fortune, all are thine ! ”

As brightly thrown, ere it expire,
The last ray of the dying fire,
So came the color to her face,
Retreating, left its pallid trace.
“ Alonzo, let this subject rest,
For strange forebodings crowd my breast—
Methought but now I saw his face
Who in my vision first held place—
Ah ! he comes ! Alonzo, see !
That horrid dream ! 't is he ! 't is he ! ”
And wildly springing, with a bound,
She sank exhausted on the ground.

Alonzo started in amaze,
And turning, met a stranger's gaze :
Although the sun then hotly shone,
A cloak was round the stranger thrown ;
Perchance some person to surprise—
Perchance 't was to conceal his guise.
“ Hold, stranger, hold ! I bid thee stand !
Thy business here, sir, I demand ! ”
“ My business shall be known in place,
But first attend to Inez' case.”
“ But how ! dost thou her name then know ? ”
“ Aye, Don Alonzo De Vero : ”
“ My name ! good heavens ! sir, explain ! ”
“ Alonzo, thou dost ask in vain ;

Enough ; I know, and am thy friend ;
See, Inez moves ! to her attend ;”
And as the stranger spoke her name,
A shudder ran throughout her frame ;
Cold drops of sweat stood on a brow,
So white, ’t was like the driven snow ;
Then languidly she oped her eyes,
And gazed around in wild surprise,
Alonzo held her drooping head—
She spoke, ’t was like one from the dead.

“ Where is the stranger ? ah, I see,
Thy business here, is it with me ?”
“ It is.” “ Enough—pray then proceed ;”
“ Inez, thou’lt all thy courage need,”
“ I am prepared, pray do not fear,
What thou would’st say I ’d quickly hear.”

“ Know then, fair girl, thy life is sought,
By one who thee in childhood taught ;
And even now thy life has sold,
Who at thy death will heir thy gold ;
Dost start ! need I repeat his name ?
Thy guardian, murderer ! is the same !”
“ ’Tis false ! ’tis false ! stranger, beware !”
“ ’Tis true, ’fore heaven thus I swear”—
And as he spoke, his arm he raised,
While Inez wildly on him gazed ;
“ The proof, the proof, Alonzo cried,”
“ My word,” the stranger quick replied.
“ Thy name ?” “ Gonlez, the chief brigand.”

“ Ha !” I have thee, traitor, stand !”

“ Back, stripling, back ; I mean no harm,
I came not here to fight, but warn ;
But should'st thou dare me into strife,
I will not answer for thy life.”

“ Hold, hold, Alonzo—stranger, cease ;
For heaven's sake, let there be peace.”

“ Inez, thy wish shall be obeyed ;
Save thee, nought had my vengeance stayed,
And heavy on him should it fall,
Who dared Alonzo *stripling* call.”

“ Alonzo, pray have done this trash,
And own that both of us were rash ;”

“ Call me a robber, traitor, knave,
I care not, so I Inez save.

'T was me that took of Pedro's gold—
To me has Inez' life been sold ;
Nay, start not, ye have nought to fear—
Were that my plan, I'd not been here.”

“ Gonlez, thy pardon—here 's my hand,
Although thou term'st thyself Brigand ;
There's something noble in thy soul,
Which o'er my feelings has control ;
But heaven's curses on that man
Who did devise this hellish plan—
Yet he shall reap his proper due
If thou canst prove thy words are true.”

“ Wilt thou comply with my request ?
If so, I'll put them to the test.”

“ Unless thy plan doth bode of ill,
Gonlez may be assured I will.”
Enough—then to my scheme attend,
And it shall bring about our end.

“ ’Twixt me and Pedro ’t is agreed
That I this night perform the deed ;
Ere he returns ’tis my desire
That Inez for the night retire ;
And thou, well armed with trusty steel,
May in the hall thyself conceal,
Where thou his horrid plan canst hear,
But must not with it interfere.
And, furthermore, to make complete,
Close round thee thou must wrap a sheet ;
And when thou the alarm dost hear,
Forth, from thy hiding place appear,
Which, with his thoughts and fears com-
Will work upon his guilty mind, [bined,
Until, led on by fear alone,
Don Pedro all his guilt will own.”

“ Gonlez, I will thy wish obey.”
“ ’Tis well—and now I must away.”
Then turning, with a pleasing look,
Forth to the woods his way he took.

The sun has sunk to rest again,
The moon is gently on the wane ;
So faint she throws her silvery light
It scarcely dims the lamps of night :

Within the hall, in pensive mood,
Sits one in lonely solitude ;
In vain he turns his restless eyes,
There 's none with him to sympathize.
“ Oh !” (he exclaims, as if in pain,
While guilty conscience racks his brain,)
“ That I were born to better fate :
Alas ! I mourn my lot too late ;
Would I repent, before me stands
My brother's ghost, and with his hands
He points, and beckons me away :
Aye, soon that summons I obey—
I feel my life is waning fast,
Perchance this night may be my last ;
For o'er me hangs such solemn dread,
I feel like one among the dead.
Still, to my purpose I'll be firm,
Save death, nought shall me from it turn :
But hark ! a heavy tread I hear—
'T is Gonlez. Pshaw ! why did I fear.
Well, Gonlez, thou hast come in time—
Hast well prepared thyself for crime ?”
“ Aye, Pedro, all is well prepared.”
Enough—now here is thy reward—
So far, all works to my desire,
And Inez early did retire.
Perchance she may not be asleep—
If not, more softly must thou creep.
Go now, Gonlez, perform thy part,
And plunge thy dagger to her heart ;

Then quick secrete thyself from harm,
For, to deceive, I'll raise alarm!"
He's gone, and silence reigns profound;
But, hark! 't is his returning sound,
And now within the hall he stands—
To Pedro shows his bloody hands:
"Pedro, thou art the heir alone,
And Inez gold is all thine own."
"Enough, Gonlez, now haste away!"
"Farewell, Don Pedro, I obey."

Now loud is heard their master's call;
Quick rush the servants to the hall,
But lo! what meets his guilty eyes—
He sees her murdered spectre rise!
The servants, trembling with affright,
In wonder gaze upon the sight,
While Pedro, gasping for his breath
Has turned the livid hue of death:
"Back, back, thou spectre to thy rest—
I will my murderous deeds confess;
But ha! do I now see aright—
Methinks a change comes o'er my sight,—
Where stood the sprite, as now I see,
A warrior's form there seems to be!"
"A warrior's form! Don Pedro, know
It is Alonzo De Vero."
"Ha! villain, art thou then a spy?
Guard well thy life, or thou shalt die."
And, as he spoke, he forward sprung,

And loud the clashing steel was rung,
As sword to sword, with mighty blow,
Each sought to lay the other low ;
But scarce six strokes their blades had told,
'Ere faintly came the cry of ' Hold.'
Each heard the sound with weapon raised,
Each paused, and on fair Inez gazed,
Who burst so sudden on the strife,
A second more had cost her life.

" Inez ! still alive, and here !
But now I saw her ghost appear :"
" Nay, Pedro, now give o'er thy dread,
That was no spectre of the dead,
But me, the hideous phantom made,
As in a sheet I stood arrayed."
" Have I been used then as a tool,
'Mongst fools been made the biggest fool ?
Where, where that traitor who so bold,
Has dared to take of Pedro's gold ?
Let me on him but set mine eyes,
And by this trusty steel, he dies !
Alonzo, Inez, pray forgive,
Since this disgrace I would not live."

" Nay, nay, my uncle say not so."
" Inez, away, none do me know,
And wouldst thou ask the wretch to live
Who takes the life he cannot give—
Live, live, when in my guilty breast,
There burns a hell that knows no rest !

Live to revenge this treachery,
Then gladly, joyfully I'll die :
My brother by my hand is gone—
Methinks his spirit becks me on.”
Just as he spoke, the bold brigand
Rushed in and grasped him by the hand.
“Pedro! be calm, thy grief give o'er,
Thy brother lost I will restore.”
“Ho! Gonlez, thou dost me surprise!
Hast thou return'd to forge new 'lies?
Would'st thou with lies pollute thy breath,
When in the agonies of death?
Go, lying villain, traitor, knave!
Back, back, I say, to him who gave!”
And as he spoke, with passion prest,
Plunged deep the dagger in his breast;
Then spouted forth the crimson gore,—
Slowly he sank upon the floor.

“'Tis done, 'tis done, I stand alone,
And hark! I hear his dying groan;
Come, friends, I pray ye calm your fears,
His groans are music in my ears:
Hist, hist, let stillness reign profound—
Hear ye that low, soft, gurgling sound,
Mark ye each shudder and each start?
Well did my steel perform its part;
Vile wretch! thine earthly hope is past,
Don Pedro is revenged at last.”

Quick, with strong arms, was Pedro seized,

But Gonlez begged for his release :
“ Come hither, I some words would say,
For life is ebbing fast away :
Hear, all who now around me stand,
The dying words of the Brigand.

Pedro, thy brother—where is he
Who played with thee in infancy ?
Who with a merry, lightsome heart,
In all thy sports took active part—
Who, like the young and nimble fawn,
With thee has bounded o’er the lawn ?
Dost start ! life ebbs—I cannot dwell—
List, all, while I the secret tell.

“ He was thy elder by a year—
Enough ; it would make him the heir ;
With gold thou paid’st to have him drown’d,
And afterward his body found ;
But Pedro, thou wert much deceived,
It was not his as thou believed ;
The body ’t was of one unknown—
Enough, it in the lake was thrown,
And, better to deceive thine eyes,
On him was put thy brother’s guise ;
Thy brother fled—left thee the heir,
But first a solemn oath he sware,
While lived the one who took thy gold,
The secret should remain untold ;
He lately died, but still the heir,
Alphonso lives.” “ Where, tell me where.”

With gasping breath Don Pedro cried ;
“ Here, here,” the dying chief replied ;
“ Behold—Gonlez, Alphonzo, one ;
Brother, I faint, my race is run :—
When first I came ’twas for thy gold ;
But when thy secret thou hadst told,
I then agreed to do the deed
Lest thou by other means succeed :
The rest thou know’st, repent and live—
May heaven, as I, the past forgive.”
He spoke, then sank upon the floor,
One gasp, and life with him was o’er.

Don Pedro like a statue gazed—
He saw not, for his eyes were glazed ;
His face assumed a ghastly look—
His frame a sudden tremor shook,
With sudden start he forward sprang,
Wildly about his arms he flung—
He fell ;—they quickly raised his head—
But, lo ! he numbered with the dead.

* * * * *

Though years have pass’d, yet still fair INEZ lives,
And, with Alonzo, thanks to Heav’n she gives.

#73

THE

BRIGAND.

A POEM.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

He left a Corsair's name to other times,
Linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes.

BYRON

IN TWO CANTOS



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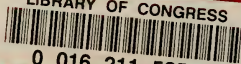
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